

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 31, 2025, 1:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Hybrid meeting

Councilors Present: Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy (Chair), Sarah Cullinan (virtual), Julie Curti (virtual), Sarah Bresolin Silver (virtual), Amy McGuire (virtual), Chris Modlish, Maya Mastro (designee for Larry Chretien; virtual), Kyle Murray, Levi Reilly, Andy Sun (virtual), Jonathan Stout (virtual), Alex Worsley (virtual), Kathryn Wright, Jessica Robertson (designee for Kate Tohme; virtual)

Councilors Absent: Marybeth Campbell

Non-voting Councilors: Digaunto Chatterjee (Eversource), Andrew Schneller (National Grid) (virtual), Kevin Sprague (Unitil; virtual)

DOER Staff Present: Colin Carroll, Marian Harkavy (virtual), Julia Fox

Consultants Present: Aidan Glaser Schoff, Kyle Schultz, Tim Woolf

Others Present: Jose Nino (We are ALX; CESAG Co-Chair), Meredith Boericke (Eversource; CESAG Co-Chair)

1. Call to Order

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), GMAC Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

2. Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy welcomed all participants to the GMAC meeting and took roll call for voting and non-voting members.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Meeting Minutes Review and Voting

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy stated that meeting minutes do not need to be voted on. She asked if there were any proposed amendments to the June 26, 2025, GMAC meeting and July 17, 2025, stakeholder session minutes. None were offered. Deputy Commissioner Troy approved the minutes.

5. GMAC Building Electrification Industry Seat Update

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy introduced *Councilor Levi Reilly, Marcus Partners, Representing the building electrification industry* as a new member of the GMAC. Councilor Levi Reilly then introduced himself to the GMAC.

6. GMAC Stakeholder Session Readout

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy discussed the future grid from a municipal lens event and praised the efforts of all those involved. She highlighted that many attendees provided praise and positive feedback to the organizers of the event. She opened the floor to discuss feedback for the event.

Julia Fox, Department of Energy Resources: We got about ten survey responses with feedback from attendees that we will share in the future.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee, Representing Eversource: My main takeaway from Cambridge and Somerville's discussions is that they came up with concrete plans and were facing enormously high costs to reach those goals. Is there a way to pull that information step load or feeder level forecasts?

Councilor Amy McGuire, Highland Electric Fleets, Representing the electric vehicle industry: First, I'll note that I am present. Also, I appreciate all the hard work from those involved with planning the event. The breakouts were a good way to engage with people and to expand robust conversation. Perhaps in future events, a more even balance between panels and breakouts in the event would be helpful.

Councilor Andrew Schneller, Representing National Grid: I also really enjoyed the event and thanks for putting it together. I think we need to do more communication and education. Hearing the questions asked by participants, they came from a place of misunderstanding regarding the specifics of what is going on in their towns. I noticed in the breakout groups that some representatives didn't know who to talk to. However, there are community managers for each town for the EDCs. However, there are different departments within the town. I think we could

share the list of community managers with the public. The GMAC can have that resource available. That way, people who may be from Gloucester but not who we are directly talking to will have a better sense of who their community manager is.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, Representing the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center: It's clear that closer relationships with municipal leaders are very important. Building relationships with these leaders who we need to work with helps with bottom-up planning. The high-level forecast is primarily top-down. Balancing this with bottom-up from the community level would be helpful and better inform the high-level forecasts.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver, ENGIE North America, Representing the energy storage industry: My takeaway follows Andrew's. It's tough for both parties, municipal employees and EDCs, to determine who should be reached out to. Also, I was impressed by the interest at the event. I concur that it should be done in other parts of the states.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: I was excited by the energy at the meeting. They were eager to build this communication and to help. They may not always be accurately describing how the planning process works, but they are trying and hoping to make better decisions for their communities.

Councilor Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation, Representing the environmental justice community: Some people were not sure what to expect coming in, but there were people who told me that the discussions were very important. Also, based on the pins placed on the map, geographic representation was primarily eastern Massachusetts. For other regions, are there entities such as MAPC who can help bring in local representatives for other discussions?

Councilor Kyle Murray, Acadia Center, Representing the environmental advocacy community: I had to miss the meeting. This might be too much work, but in the ESMPs we identified different regions with different challenges. Could we hit all the regions in the ESMP?

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: That may be too many, but it would be good to hit areas around the regions in the ESMPs. Thinking about the second stakeholder event, central or western mass should be the focus.

Councilor Bresolin Silver: Are those tentatively scheduled?

Julia Fox: No. We can prioritize scheduling those.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: November and December are notably hard to schedule in.

7. Updates on ESMP Activities

Councilors provided updates on ESMP Activities.

Metrics and Biannual Report

Councilor Chris Modlish, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Representing the Attorney General: For metrics and biannual reports: On July 16, intervenors could provide comments which are responses to EDC reply comments. The EDCs filed joint reply comments yesterday, July 30. There were many significant revisions in those most recent EDC filings primarily to reflect the Phase II Order.

Integrated Energy Planning (IEP)

Councilor Kyle Murray: The IEP working group met last Thursday. There were not many substantive updates.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: It was mostly a meeting on best practices from other areas. There are now two public listening sessions, but format and details are TBD.

Councilor Kyle Murray: There were not many details and specifics, but more of a discussion of big picture elements. Other geographies seemed to be in the same spot as GMAC in that the specifics are very tough to figure out.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: There are two meetings left as well as the public listening sessions. The group of state agencies submitted a letter to the working group. This covered topic areas that they wanted to have addressed as well as additional process after the working group meetings conclude.

Long-Term System Planning Process

Councilor Chris Modlish: Not much of an update since we last discussed this. The DPU issued a memorandum covering whether the proceeding should take a phased approach or not, as well as whether a statewide flexible interconnection process would be incorporated into the LTSPP. Waiting for further notice from DPU as to what comes next.

8. GMAC Strategic Planning Update

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy discussed the 2026 strategic plan elements. She highlighted that councilors should review the notes prior to their small group discussions. She discussed that the strategic plan contained the role of the GMAC, objectives, activities, and workplan for the GMAC.

Councilor Kyle Murray: For the small group discussion, are they in person?

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: No, they are online.

Kyle Schultz, Synapse Energy Economics, GMAC Consultant discussed the GMAC survey. She discussed survey respondents' views on the GMAC's role, member education and general education, potential objective focus areas, potential activities and workplan, and what the GMAC should stop, start, and continue doing in 2026.

9. Energy Equity Presentations

a. GMAC Consultant Presentation

Tim Woolf, Synapse Energy Economics, GMAC Consultant presented energy equity in Massachusetts and other states. He discussed definitions of equity, energy equity in Illinois and Washington, the equity frameworks in the ESMPs, and additional equity directives in Massachusetts such as those in the energy efficiency programs. He explained distributional equity analyses and discussed potential applications for Massachusetts.

b. Community Engagement Stakeholder Advisory Group (CESAG) Presentation

Meredith Boericke from Eversource's Regulatory Affairs team and Jose Nino from We Are ALX, co-chairs of the CESAG, presented on the CESAG.

Meredith Boericke thanked members of the CESAG. She discussed the background of the CESAG, the process of reaching out to potential Community Benefit Organizations, and the timeline of advisory sessions.

Jose Nino discussed the CESAG final product which included the CESAG framework, stakeholder categories, equity measurements, and a glossary. He discussed specifics on the structure of the CESAG framework, implementation of tasks, deliverables, milestones and outcomes.

Meredith Boericke discussed measurements of equity, and lessons learned from the CESAG.

A break began at 2:17 p.m.

A break ended at 2:23 p.m. and the meeting commenced.

c. GMAC Equity Working Group (EWG) Presentation

Councilor Kathryn Wright presented updates in the Equity Working Group (EWG). She discussed EWG responsibilities, strategic planning, potential plans for upcoming EWG tasks, and a review of the next EWG meeting.

10. Facilitated Discussion

Councilor Julie Curti, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Representing municipal or regional interests led the facilitated discussion and opened the floor for any clarification questions.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: What is the process for evaluation of the CESAG, logistically? Will it be brought back later?

Meredith Boericke: The CESAG as a body has no formal scheduled meeting on the books. The biannual report will have some reporting out. We have established connections with the other CESAG members. We want to see how things roll out with the projects.

Jose Nino: As the implementation rolls out, it would be great to have an advisory council, e.g. once a quarter, but that depends on scheduling and availability.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Clarifying question related to one of the Synapse slides. You had mentioned that the DPU would open a proceeding on community benefit agreements. Can you clarify what you meant there.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: My running interpretation is that the current siting process includes community benefit agreements, the DPU wanted a process hosted by EEA.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Is there a process establishing a CBA framework by the DPU currently?

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: I think EEA is implementing the legislature, which was assigned to the equity office within the EEA.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: CBA frameworks have popped up here and in the EWG and elsewhere. Part of the role of the GMAC could be to follow the work on CBAs.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: It's a very good question for strategic planning. The guidance on CBAs will apply to utility construction. It's something good to focus on as a deliverable for the next year.

Councilor Julie Curti: Councilor Sarah Cullinan raised a good point on the Community Benefit Agreements.

Councilor Chris Modlish: For the CESAG, have you considered how the role of the group would change after ESMP Phase II cost recovery Order. One of the purposes of the CESAG is for large projects such as substations. So has the CESAG thought of how things have changed after that order?

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: This may differ from National Grid, but nothing for large projects changes from Eversource's perspectives.

Meredith Boericke: CESAG was working off of the Phase I ESMP Order because that was what we had.

Councilor Chris Modlish: Taking Eversource as an example, are you planning to apply CESAG to the core investments?

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: 100 percent. We are going to be taking advantage of this for the Dorchester substation before the Energy Facilities Siting Board.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: We are going to be evaluating it for other investments going forward.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: How are the EDCs thinking about staffing, training, partnerships etc. to implement the framework in reality?

Meredith Boericke: We have a dedicated project engagement team. There is also a community relations group. We feel we are well suited to begin implementation.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: Mark isn't available today, who was our CESAG member, so I won't speak on his behalf.

Councilor Kevin Sprague, Representing Unitil: For Unitil, based upon what was approved in the ESMP and what we are planning for core investments, we don't have projects of this size implemented in the next few years. The whole formal CESAG process may not fit with the projects we have planned now.

Councilor Alex Worsley, Stack Energy Consulting, Representing the transmission-scale renewable energy industry: Along the same lines, for the projects that are applicable, are the projects that you are thinking of applying it to? What are the first projects going to be?

Meredith Boericke: The ESMP lays out lots of projects. I can't give you an ordered list of projects today. Part of the charge of the CESAG is public transparency and documentation, which will be available.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: We will be applying it to three EV sites to the extent it applies to those projects.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Do you see a role for the GMAC for providing lessons learned? What do you think would be the most helpful thing from the GMAC with the process.

Meredith Boericke: I would welcome an invite back so that we can discuss these questions and issues. We are not going to make any changes today to the framework since it was a consensus process. The model we want is test-learn-revise, repeat. Community engagement is an art, so being open to feedback is part of the process.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: Regarding the practices from the EEAC that we could consider. How the EEAC has defined designated equity communities could make a lot of sense in the ESMP context. The EJ population definition doesn't capture things like existing health burdens, or where communities might have disproportionate amounts of energy infrastructure in them. So, defining a set of communities with the measures which are the most relevant for distribution system energy infrastructure projects would potentially make a lot of sense. It may be a similar subset compared to EJ population definitions. I think that it is an analysis that could be done.

Councilor Julie Curti: That overlays with comments from the GMAC future grid event, which is that communities are interested in more local level information. I am registering my agreement with your comment. For EWG members at the table, what topics are the highest priority?

Councilor Kathryn Wright: The biggest things we have discussed are the question of affordability, and conversations and dockets in the energy transition. Especially the aggregate bill impacts of the energy transition. Also, translating proposed investments into ways that are understandable to people. For example, this could become public. The conversations on community-benefit agreements are on hold since it is in flux, but that will likely come back later.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: It feels like the things that are being asked for are based on concrete things. The last stakeholder event helped just having people hear each other discuss.

Councilor Kyle Murray: Having meetings in the communities and talking to individuals. E.g. in the last event, are we getting to as many people as we can.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan: I've been on a couple substation tours, and they have been extremely informative. Understanding what is there and what isn't there is so helpful. Meredith your point that the CESAG went on a site tour which was helpful for sharing understanding. Thinking about an engagement event for municipal leaders where they tour substations in the areas that they represent.

Councilor Julie Curti: Does anyone have any reactions to the slide bullet about distributional equity analysis being provided to the GMAC?

Councilor Kathryn Wright: We have made that recommendation in the past, as a broad recommendation as part of other metrics we have proposed in the ESMPs. For example, for the grid services compensation fund.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Thank you Sarah for the mention of the substation tour. I'd like to highlight that there is an upcoming event of a substation tour on August 28th. I think they are incredibly helpful. Our next GMAC meeting is on resilience.

11. Close

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy discussed the upcoming EWG meeting, stakeholder session, and GMAC meeting.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Aidan Glaser Schoff
Synapse Energy Economics

Meeting Attachments

- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Slide Deck
- Draft June 26, 2025 GMAC Meeting Minutes
- Draft July 17, 2025 stakeholder session minutes
- Equity Topic Brief
- July Activity Tracker
- GMAC Strategic Planning Survey Results